

Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

SUBJECT: BICYCLE RIDING ON DOWNTOWN SIDEWALKS **DATE:** September 18, 2013

Approved



Date

9/26/13

RECOMMENDATION

Accept report on bicycle riding on sidewalks in Downtown San Jose, including a summary of public input and proposed staff actions.

BACKGROUND

On March 7, 2013, Councilmember Liccardo provided a memorandum to the Rules and Open Government Committee discussing complaints from pedestrians, particularly seniors living Downtown, about the risks posed by cyclists riding on sidewalks (see Exhibit A). In the memorandum, it was suggested that the City Council pass an ordinance prohibiting bicycle riding on sidewalks in downtown San Jose. State law allows municipalities to regulate this practice, and many large cities in California have already done so. The Rules Committee directed a review of the subject by the Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee.

On April 8, 2013, the Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee discussed the issue of bicycle riding on sidewalks as part of the Bike Plan 2020 Annual Report. Department of Transportation staff provided a presentation and reported observations of bicycle travel in the Downtown area. On Santa Clara Street where there are no bicycle lanes, the majority of bicycle travel is occurring on sidewalks. However, on San Fernando Street where there are bicycle lanes, the majority of bicycle travel is in those lanes on the street. The T&E Committee discussed the topic, received public comments and proposed to have staff work with Councilmember Liccardo's Office to conduct further community outreach.

ANALYSIS

Increased concern has been expressed over "reckless" bicycle riding on Downtown sidewalks. This behavior can be characterized as traveling too fast for conditions especially when there is insufficient room to safely maneuver around pedestrians on the sidewalk. This can occur because the sidewalks are narrow and/or they are crowded with pedestrians. In those cases, cyclists should walk their bicycles on the sidewalk or ride on the street. Police have the ability to

cite bicyclists for traveling too fast under these conditions in violation of California Vehicle Code section 22350. This is difficult to enforce in San Jose because of limited resources and other public safety priorities. The same is true in many other municipalities where sidewalk bicycle riding downtown is prohibited outright by ordinance.

Public Outreach and Comments

The City has received diverse feedback on the subject of banning bicycle riding on Downtown sidewalks as summarized below and in the attached letters.

- On June 25, 2013, a community meeting was held on the topic of bicycle riding on Downtown sidewalks. Twenty-five people attended, and people expressed both support for an ordinance prohibiting bicycle riding on downtown sidewalks and opposition to such an ordinance.
- The San Jose Senior Citizens Commission and other senior members of the community have endorsed prohibitions on riding bicycles on sidewalks, particularly in the Downtown core area. See attached letters in Exhibits B1, B2 and B3.
- A coalition of interests supporting “active transportation”, including the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Greenbelt Alliance, and TransForm, have advocated for prohibiting “reckless” bicycling on sidewalks, but not a full restriction of bicycling on sidewalks especially by those who do not ride in the street because of health, age or safety concerns. See attached letter in Exhibit C.
- The San Jose Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee reviewed the topic and members expressed a variety of opinions including the importance of: (1) providing a safe place for pedestrians on sidewalks free of speeding and reckless bicyclists; and (2) allowing sidewalk bicycling for children, and on busy streets with no bike lanes, so long as bicyclists travel slowly, yield to pedestrians and walk when the sidewalk is too crowded.

Proposed Action Plan

In considering the diverse community feedback, DOT recommends that the following proactive steps be taken to both enhance the safety of pedestrians on Downtown sidewalks and to facilitate safe and convenient bicycling on Downtown streets.

1. Identify the core area of Downtown with the most significant level of pedestrian activity as a pilot location for a “Pedestrian Priority Zone” (PPZ) as shown on Figure 1.
2. Develop signs and/or sidewalk markings to place on the busier sidewalks in the PPZ with a message to 1) voluntarily walk your bicycle on the sidewalk or 2) use a parallel street

where there are designated bicycle facilities. This signing would be developed in concert with the Office of Cultural Affairs. As an example, the City of Berkeley, California has special signs adjacent to high use sidewalks. The signs read: *Be Courteous! Walk your bike and you'll be Sidewalk Friendly.* (See Figure 2.)

3. Collaborate with the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, the Downtown Association, and others to educate the public on sidewalk bicycle riding and encourage alternatives. The education campaign would be integrated with the related education for users of the Bike Share system.
4. Continue to build out the planned network of Downtown bicycle facilities and then conduct an extensive campaign to encourage on-street cycling in this part of the City.
5. Seek funding for enforcement of a ban on bicycle riding in the PPZ.
6. Implement the ban when several key on-street bicycle facilities Downtown are completed, funding has been secured for enforcement, and the education campaign is in place.

Staff proposes to report back on the issue of bicycle riding on sidewalks as part of the next Bike Plan 2020 Annual Report to the T&E Committee, expected in Spring 2014.

COORDINATION

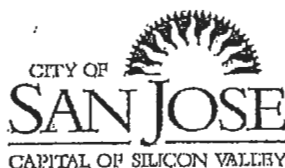
Preparation of this report has been coordinated with the Office of Cultural Affairs and the City Attorney's Office.

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN
Director of Transportation

For questions, contact Paul Smith, Deputy Director for Transportation Planning and Project Delivery, at 408-793-6942.

Attachments

PUBLIC RECORD Q 9/18/13PUBLIC RECORD dRECEIVED
San Jose City Clerk
SENIOR CITIZENS COMMISSION

2013 MAR 20 PM 1:35

City of San Jose
Community Services
1694 Adrian Way
San Jose, Ca 95122

March 19, 2013

Mayor Chuck Reed
Members of the San José City Council
City Hall
200 East Santa Clara Street.
San José, CA 95113

Dear Honorable Mayor Reed and City Council:

On behalf of the San José Senior Citizens Commission, I am advising you of the following motion that was passed at our March 2013 meeting:

Senior Commission to endorse the proposal by Councilperson Liccardo "Prohibition of the Riding of Bicycles on the Sidewalk Within the Downtown Core."

This proposal helps protect Senior Pedestrians while allowing children under the age of 12 to ride on the sidewalk.

The Health and Safety Subcommittee of the Senior Commission studied this issue at some length and brought it to the full Commission. The motion to endorse the Liccardo proposal was unanimous

Seniors are at disproportionate risk from being stuck by bikers riding on the sidewalk. A fall can be devastating for fragile Seniors. In many, if not most cases, it is also more difficult for Seniors to maneuver out of the way to avoid being stuck. Adult bicyclists continue to ride recklessly on the downtown sidewalks while the bike lanes remain largely empty. I can personally attest to this as I walk down Santa Clara Street and around San Jose State University at least ten times a week. I myself have been struck twice.

Citizens have testified on this matter before the Rules Committee in months past. We urge the implementation of the Liccardo proposal which is both thoughtful and well researched.

Sincerely,

Martha O'Connell,
Chair, Senior Citizens Commission

PUBLIC RECORD 6RECEIVED
San Jose City Clerk

2013 SEP -9 AM 11:24

Straight Talk - Not Chatter



H.O.M.E.
Homeowners Organized To Maintain Equity

September 7, 2013

TO: Councilperson Sam Liccardo

Mayor and Council

FROM:

Joanne Ingold

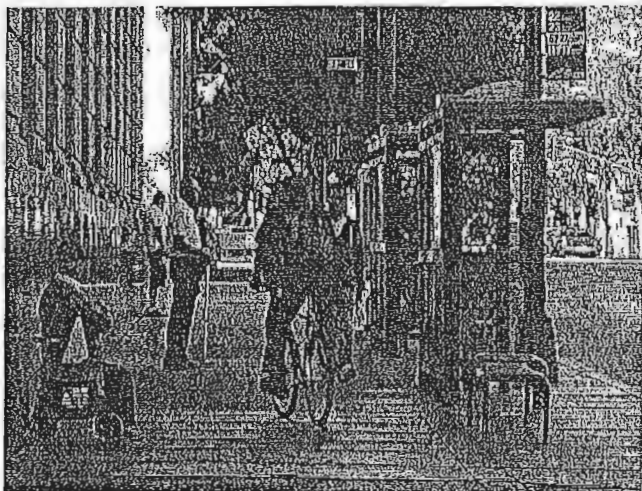
RE:

Ban on Sidewalk Bike Riding in San Jose

HOME supports the Liccardo memo on banning of bike riding on sidewalks in San Jose. These photos were taken today on Santa Clara Street, along with many more.

Protect Seniors and the disabled, and the general population who try to use the sidewalks in safety. It is very frightening to have bikes whizzing by when you cannot move fast to get out of the way. "Each year, one in every three adults age 65 and older falls. Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head injuries, and can increase the risk of early death. Fortunately, falls are a public health problem that is largely preventable." (CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>)

Ban bikes on sidewalks. Protect Seniors and the disabled.



Legally blind and disabled Seniors at risk on Santa Clara Street. Ban the bikes !

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PUBLIC RECORD

C. Sept. 10 2013 SEP 11 AM 8:57
RECEIVED
Jose City Clerk

Dear Mayor and City Council,
Regarding Bicycle Ban on
Sidewalks.

My name is Sofia Mendoza.
I am a Renal Diabetic and receive
dialysis at Satellite Dialysis.
Mr Ramon Mendoza and his
wife are also on dialysis.

A little over a month ago
he was on his ~~sto~~ electric wheel
chair on King Road and was
struck by someone riding a
bicycle at high speed. His legs
were both amputated. He is about
85 years old and very ill.
The bicycle hit between
artificial legs and his chair
turned over and he fell to
the ground. The bicycle
driver left him on the
ground and took off. His

wheel ~~sat~~ chair was totally destroyed and he had to get a new one. He suffered internal pain and bled for about 2 weeks. His body was covered with bruises and scratches.

I can't walk and use a scooter. I am very afraid that I may be hit by a bicycle because even on streets with bicycle lanes they still ride on the sidewalk. I greatly support the park and am advocating for seniors and children. I live near Empire Gardens Elem. School and it is not safe for children. If you need to talk to me, please call me home 408 295 5268
Cell 408 568 9831

Sofia Mendoza



April 5, 2013

Transportation and Environment Committee
San José City Council
Via Email

Re: Bike Plan 2020 Report – Bicycle Riding on Downtown Sidewalks

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

This letter is in response to Department of Transportation Director Hans Larsen's March 20 memo regarding bicycle riding on downtown sidewalks. Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition has long worked closely with the City of San José to get more people safely riding bicycles, so we appreciate the City's efforts to provide people with comfortable on-street bicycle facilities that provide an attractive alternative to sidewalk riding. We also understand the City's desire to maintain a welcoming environment for pedestrians, especially near downtown businesses.

We support the proposed definition and prohibition of "reckless" bicycling on sidewalks in the downtown area. As ambassadors for cycling in our area, we find it extremely important that pedestrians' safety and comfort are respected and feel it is reasonable to ask people on bikes to ride slowly and safely if they choose to use the sidewalk. This will also keep bicyclists visible and predictable to motorists who may be entering or exiting driveways or turning across crosswalks in the downtown area.

We do not agree, however, that bicycle riding should be restricted from sidewalks with adjacent on-street bicycle facilities. This would unnecessarily add an ordinance that would be rarely enforceable given our strained law enforcement resources. Furthermore, it would criminalize a healthy behavior (bicycle riding) being undertaken by those who likely do not ride in the street because of health, age, or safety concerns.

Rather, we suggest using a stencil to paint "Please walk your bike" logos on sidewalk areas with constrained width, high pedestrian volumes, or other conditions that make the presence of bicycles on the sidewalk concerning. This approach has worked well in Long Beach, CA. Unlike an ordinance, the stenciled request relies more on individuals' sense of respect and courtesy than threat of criminality. It is important, however, that accessible bicycle facilities be available adjacent to these particular stretches of sidewalk.

We also suggest limiting any ordinance or restriction to riders over the age of 13 years. This would keep San José sidewalk riding regulations in line with those in San Francisco and allow children to take advantage of downtown's wide sidewalks until they are fully ready to ride on the street.

Importantly, we think a public meeting should be held on this matter, so that members of the community can relate their experiences with sharing the sidewalks and the roads downtown. Surely many different residents and workers downtown have had many different experiences, and those should be heard and considered.

Thank you for this opportunity for input. We have shared our thoughts with Department of Transportation staff and look forward to working with the Department to shape policies that balance the needs of all users of the road while promoting active transportation.

Sincerely,



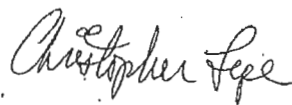
Corinne Winter
President and Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition



Jessica Zenk
Senior Director
Transportation Policy
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

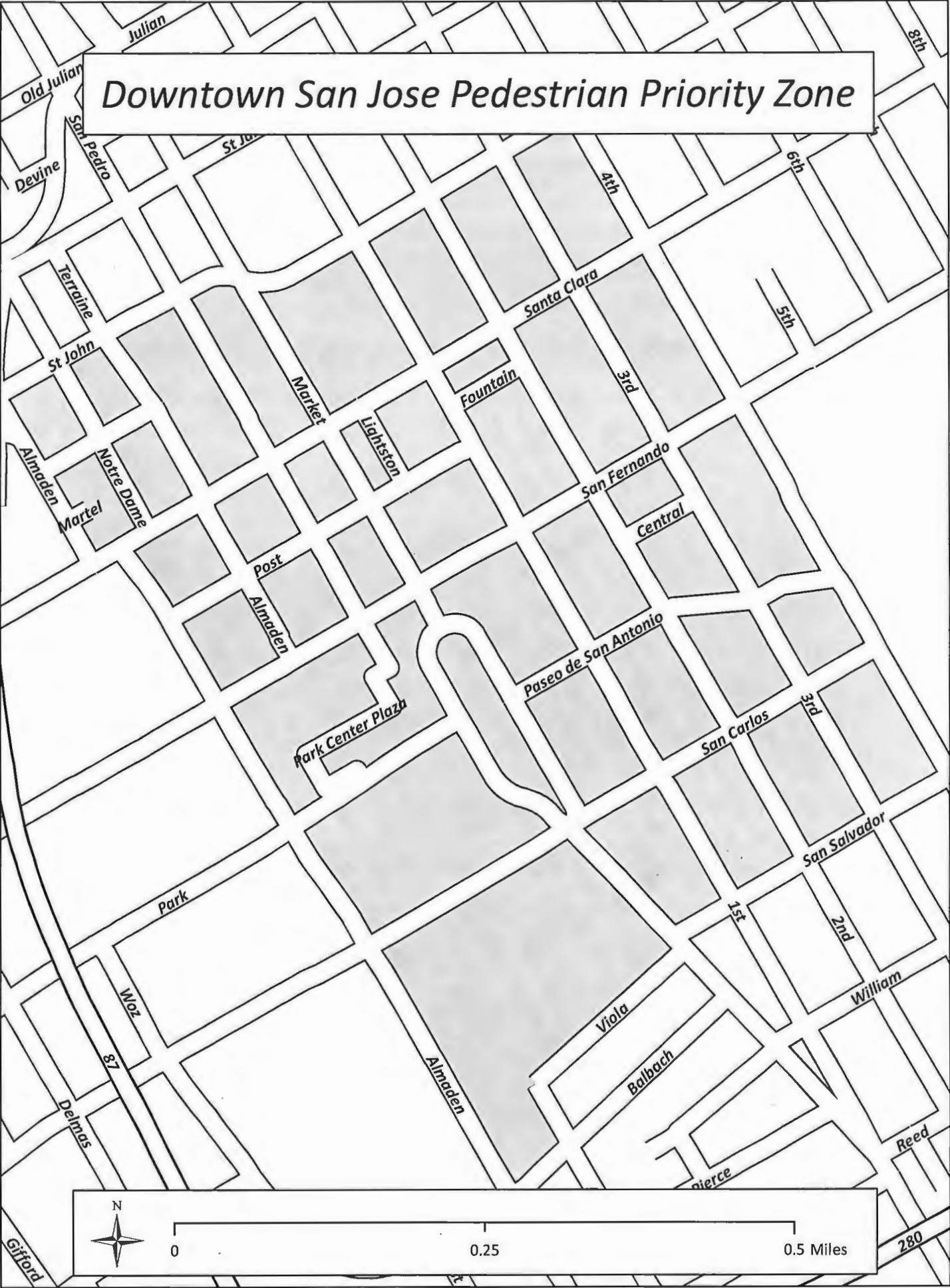


Michele Beasley
Senior Field Representative
Greenbelt Alliance



Christopher Lepe
SV Community Planner
TransForm

Figure 1



Example of Pedestrian Priority Educational Message
(Berkeley, CA)

